

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **Federal Agency Names:** Office of Global Programs (OGP), Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce (DOC)
- **Funding Opportunity Title:** NOAA Climate and Global Change Program for Fiscal Year (FY) 2006
- **Announcement Type:** Initial Announcement.
- **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:** 11.431, Climate and Atmospheric Research
- **Dates:** Letters of Intent should be received by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time, May 20, 2005. Full proposals must be received no later than 5 p.m. Eastern Time, July 15, 2005.
- **Application Submission:** Applications shall be submitted through Grants.gov APPLY; a date time receipt indication is included and will be the basis of determining timeliness. If the applicant does not have Internet access, please contact the OGP Grants Manager, Diane Brown, NOAA/OGP, 1100 Wayne Avenue, Suite 1210; Silver Spring, MD 20910-5603; phone 301-427-2357.

Funding Opportunity Description: The Climate and Global Change Program represents a NOAA contribution to evolving national and international programs designed to improve our ability to observe, understand, predict, and respond to changes in the global environment. This program builds on NOAA's mission requirements and long-standing capabilities in global change research and prediction. The NOAA Program is a key contributing element of the U.S. Climate Change Science Program, which is coordinated by the interagency Committee on Environmental and Natural Resources. NOAA's program is designed to complement other agencies' contributions to that national effort.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objectives

The overall goal of the NOAA climate program is to understand climate variability and change to enhance society's ability to plan and respond. NOAA Climate and Global Change (C&GC) program aims at improved scientific understanding of the earth's past and present climate variability and change to improve climate forecast skill, increase the credibility of climate change projections, and the use of climate information for policy and decision makers and resource managers.

NOAA believes that the C&GC program will benefit significantly from a strong partnership with outside investigators. NOAA's broad objective is to establish a national information service based on reliable assessments and quantitative predictions of changing global climate. Once established, this service will help NOAA provide high-quality predictions and assessments to the public and private sectors, other federal and state agencies, and the international community. The near-term objective is to provide reliable predictions of global climate changes, both natural and human-induced, and their associated societal impacts on time scales ranging from seasons to a century or more.

NOAA's C&GC program is addressing climate initiatives outlined in the Climate Change Science Program (CCSP), which encompasses both the U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) and the Climate Change Research Initiative (CCRI). NOAA's program is an integral part of the interagency CCSP and it will continue to address a better understanding of the global climate system. Changing climate confronts us with significant economic, health, safety, and national security implications. NOAA has a significant responsibility in operational observation, research, prediction, and information management efforts for the global change study effort.

B. Program Priorities

In FY 2006, NOAA will only accept individual proposals in the Program Elements listed below (not Global Carbon Cycle). The names, affiliations and phone numbers of relevant program managers are provided. Investigators are encouraged to visit the C&GC program web page (<http://www.ogp.noaa.gov/>) for general program information prior to submitting full proposals. Applicants may also communicate with program managers for information.

1. Atmospheric Composition and Climate (ACC):

The ACC program element pursues two overall research objectives: (1) to improve the predictive understanding of the radiative forcing of the climate system by aerosols and by chemically-active, short-lived greenhouse gases, such as

tropospheric ozone and methane, and (2) to better characterize the recovery of the stratospheric ozone layer, including its role in climate change. The integrated research activities that address these objectives involve instrument development, global observations, laboratory studies, and theoretical modeling by NOAA and extramural partners. A hallmark of the Program is that its objectives are cooperatively framed with both national and international collaborators. Nationally, the Program's aerosol research is part of the interagency U.S. Climate Change Science Program. Internationally, the Program's research contributes to projects of the International Global Atmospheric Chemistry (IGAC) program of the International Geosphere-Biosphere Program (IGBP), and the Stratospheric Processes and their role in Climate (SPARC) program of the World Climate Research Program (WCRP).

For FY 2006, the ACC program element is soliciting proposals under three specific topics: (1) aerosol-cloud-climate interactions; (2) proposals to participate in the Gulf of Mexico ACC Study (GoMACCS), a NOAA-led interagency 2006 field program to study the influence of aerosols on the radiative balance of the atmosphere over the Gulf of Mexico and Western Tropical North Atlantic; and (3) integrating satellite observations of climate-relevant atmospheric constituents and processes with other measurement techniques.

An information sheet containing further details on the ACC program can be found at: <http://www.ogp.noaa.gov/grants/2005/acc.pdf>. The ACC home page is located at <http://www.ogp.noaa.gov/mpe/atmochem/index.htm>. For further information, please contact the NOAA program manager, Kea Duckenfield (kea.duckenfield@noaa.gov, 301-427-2369, fax: 301-427-2073).

2. Climate Change Data and Detection (CCDD):

For FY 2006, the CCDD program element is soliciting proposals in the following three areas:

- 1) development of climate reference data sets;
- 2) climate change detection and attribution studies, in joint sponsorship with the Department of Energy's Climate Change Prediction Program; and
- 3) paleoclimate.

Information sheets containing further details on these activities can be found at: <http://www.ogp.noaa.gov/mpe/ccdd>. For further information, please contact one of the NOAA program managers, Chris Miller (Christopher.D.Miller@noaa.gov, 301-427-2376, fax: 301-427-2073) or Bill Murray (William.L.Murray@noaa.gov, 301-427-2378, fax: 301-427-2073).

3. Climate Dynamics and Experimental Prediction (CDEP):

NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Prediction (NCEP) and OGP jointly initiated the NOAA Climate Test Bed (CTB) in FY 2005. The goal of the CTB is to accelerate the transition of research and development into improved NOAA operational climate forecasts, products and applications. Initial priority areas of the CTB include providing routine assessments of operational climate forecast models, developing improved forecast tools and objective verification for NOAA's climate forecasts, and developing the next generation climate forecast system using a multi-model ensemble approach. The CTB will provide an operational testing environment to support short term (up to 3 years) competitive applied research and development projects that will result in a direct influence on operational methodologies, to be carried out jointly by scientists from NCEP, other NOAA organizations and the broader research community. Further details on CTB can be found at: <http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/ctb/>

For FY 2006, the CDEP program element is soliciting proposals for pilot CTB projects. The priority is to enhance monthly to seasonal climate forecasts and application products. Proposals aimed at enhancing operational seasonal forecasts using multi-model ensemble methodologies, improving forecast models used in operations based on the Climate Process and modeling Team (CPT) approach, and enhancing and evaluating the NOAA global ocean analysis system and products will be considered, subject to availability of funds. Details on U.S. CLIVAR Climate Process Modeling Teams can be found at: <http://www.usclivar.org/CPT/index-newcpt.html>

An information sheet containing further details on NOAA's CDEP program can be found at: www.ogp.noaa.gov/mpe/cdep/index.htm For further information, please contact the NOAA program manager, Ming Ji (Ming.Ji@noaa.gov, 301-427-2373, fax: 301-427-2073).

4. Climate Prediction Program for the Americas (CPPA):

The CPPA is an integrated competitive research program with a goal to improve operational intraseasonal to interannual climate and hydrologic forecasting. The scientific basis for the CPPA program is that the climate predictability on intraseasonal to interannual time scales is largely determined by slow variations of the ocean and land surface conditions.

For FY2006, the CPPA program element is soliciting proposals under the following four research areas:

- 1) ocean, atmosphere and land-surface processes including drought;
- 2) predictability of climate variations on intra-seasonal to interannual time scale for the Americas, including predictability of the continental-scale monsoon systems;
- 3) science infusion into climate forecast, monitoring, and analysis systems that has operational applications; and

- 4) climate-based hydrologic forecasting capabilities and decision support tools for water resource applications.

An information sheet containing further details on NOAA's CPPA program can be found at: <http://www.ogp.noaa.gov/mpe/cppa>. For general CPPA science directions and implementation strategies, please refer to the GAPP Science and Implementation Plan (<http://www.ogp.noaa.gov/mpe/gapp/gappscienceplan.pdf>) and U.S. CLIVAR Pan-American Implementation Plan (http://www.usclivar.org/Pubs/PanAm_Plan_2002.pdf). For further information, please contact one of the NOAA program managers, Jin Huang (Jin.Huang@noaa.gov, 301-427-2371, fax: 301-427-2073) or Michael Patterson (Michael.Patterson@noaa.gov, 301-427-2379, fax: 301-427-2073).

5. Climate Variability and Predictability (CLIVAR):

The U.S. CLIVAR program seeks to observe, model and understand patterns of climate variability on seasonal to decadal time scales and to assess the predictability of such climate variability. The ultimate goal of NOAA's participation in CLIVAR is to improve predictions of climate variability and projections of climate change on seasonal to multi-decadal time scales, and regional spatial scales, for optimal use in resource planning and policy decision making. The program is designed to understand global climate variability and potential changes due to climate system feedbacks; to determine the spatial and temporal extent to which this variability is predictable and to develop the observational, theoretical, and computational means to predict variability and project potential future changes.

NOAA's CLIVAR research focuses on large-scale recurrent patterns of variability that influence climate on the regional scale, particularly over the U.S. Among these patterns are the El Nino-Southern Oscillation (ENSO), Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO), Tropical Atlantic Variability (TAV), the North Atlantic Oscillation (NAO), and the American monsoon systems.

For FY 2006, the CLIVAR program element is soliciting proposals in the areas of climate variability and predictability in the Atlantic and Pacific sectors, with particular emphasis on global coupled ocean-atmosphere dynamics. An information sheet containing further details on NOAA's CLIVAR program can be found at: <http://www.ogp.noaa.gov/mpe/clivar.index.htm>.

Applicants should note that CLIVAR PACS research is supported under the new CPPA program element.

For further information, investigators may contact the NOAA program manager, James Todd (James.Todd@noaa.gov, 301-427-2383, fax: 301-427-2073).

6. Sector Applications and Research Program (SARP):

Climate science and services have the potential to help inform decision making in sectors and regions that are affected by climate variability and change. A multi-disciplinary, research, assessment and applications effort is fundamental to creating an effective bridge between societal need and scientific insights and products. Toward this end, the OGP Climate and Societal Interactions Division addresses a spectrum of issues ranging from problem identification and assessment, to the development of science-based solutions and tools, to the articulation of societal need back to the research and service communities.

For FY 2006, the SARP program is soliciting proposals for social-science based research focused on the role of climate and climate information in the management of coasts and water resources.

SARP is designed both to complement the RISA program as well as address new avenues of research that are necessary and not currently covered by RISA. SARP resources will concentrate on building an accumulated knowledge base in terms of tools, methodologies, and theories to understand and address decision challenges relevant to a varying climate and its role in critically impacted sectors. In FY 2006, the goal is to begin to perform a systematic assessment of requirements for climate information in coastal and water resources management.

An information sheet containing further details on the SARP program can be found at: <http://www.ogp.noaa.gov/mpe/csi/econhd/index.htm>. For further information, please contact one of the NOAA program managers, Nancy Beller-Simms (Nancy.Beller-Simms@noaa.gov, 301-427-2351, fax: 301-427-2082) or Lisa Farrow Vaughan (Lisa.Vaughan@noaa.gov, 301-427-2343, fax: 301-427-2082).

7. NOAA Climate Transition Program (NCTP):

Climate science and services have the potential to help inform decision making in sectors and regions that are affected by climate variability and change. A multi-disciplinary, research, assessment and applications effort is fundamental to creating an effective bridge between societal need and scientific insights and products. Toward this end, the NOAA Climate and Societal Interactions Division addresses a spectrum of issues ranging from problem identification and assessment, to the development of science-based solutions and tools, to the articulation of societal need back to the research and service communities.

NOAA's Climate Transition Program (NCTP) supports the transition of research into products, processes or policy tools that will expand regional decision makers' use of climate information in their operational settings. Competitive projects outline a structured pathway designed to result in the transition of a well-developed prototype decision tool to an operational outcome. The program

supports structured partnerships between operational staff, decision makers, prototype developers, and an outreach/education element. Each proposal must have a cost-sharing percentage of at least 5% of total costs. For FY 2006, the NCTP Program is soliciting a limited number of new proposals.

For further information about this project, investigators may contact the NOAA program manager, Josh Foster (Josh.Foster@noaa.gov, 301-427-2370) or see <http://www.ogp.noaa.gov/mpe/nctp/index.html>.

8. Regional Integrated Sciences and Assessments (RISA):

Climate science and services have the potential to help inform decision making in sectors and regions that are affected by climate variability and change. A multi-disciplinary, research, assessment and applications effort is fundamental to creating an effective bridge between societal need and scientific insights and products. Toward this end, the NOAA Climate and Societal Interactions Division addresses a spectrum of issues ranging from problem identification and assessment, to the development of science-based solutions and tools, to the articulation of societal need back to the research and service communities.

The Regional Integrated Sciences and Assessments (RISA) program supports integrated, place-based research across a range of social, natural, and physical science disciplines to expand decision-makers' options in the face of climate change and variability at the regional level. It does this in a manner that is cognizant of the context decision-makers function within and the constraints they face in managing their climate sensitive resources. RISA possesses three distinct qualities: (1) fostering interdisciplinary research and assessment synthesis; (2) improving our understanding of and bridging the gap among climatic, environmental and societal interactions on different temporal and spatial scales; and (3) contributing to regional decision support and climate information service. A successful RISA program requires innovative and embedded long-term partnerships among a spectrum of interested parties including Federal, State, Native, regional, local and private entities. The program relies heavily on consolidating the results and data from ongoing NOAA/OGP disciplinary program elements, already funded in a region, into an integrated framework.

For FY 2006, the RISA program is soliciting proposals to support a single RISA project in each of the following regions: a) Alaska/Arctic, b) North/South Carolinas, and c) New England. We encourage projects that create partnerships among institutions focused on these regions and build on existing efforts within these regions to study the impacts of climate and expand research in support of climate services. Project duration must fall within the range of 3-5 years.

For additional information, investigators may contact the NOAA program manager, Caitlin Simpson (Caitlin.Simpson@noaa.gov, 301-427-2345, fax: 301-427-2082).

9. Global Carbon Cycle (GCC):

The U.S. Interagency Carbon Cycle Science Program (CCSP) seeks to answer two overarching questions: 1) How large and variable are the dynamic reservoirs and fluxes of carbon within the Earth system, and how might carbon cycling change and be changed in future years, decades and centuries, and 2) What are our options for managing carbon sources and sinks to achieve an appropriate balance of risk, costs, and benefits to society? For further information on the interagency program, please consult the web at: <http://www.carboncyclescience.gov>.

For FY 2006, the GCC program element is not soliciting new proposals. For further information, investigators may contact the NOAA program manager, Kathy Tedesco (Kathy.Tedesco@noaa.gov, 301-427-2382, fax: 301-427-2073).

C. Program Authority

49 U.S.C. 44720, 33 U.S.C. 883d, 15 U.S.C. 2904, 15 U.S.C. 2931-2934

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

NOAA believes that the C&GC program will benefit significantly from a strong partnership with outside investigators. Please be advised that actual funding levels will depend upon the final FY 2006 budget appropriations. In FY 2004, \$10M in first year funding was available for 62 new awards; similar funds and number of awards are anticipated in FY 2005. Total Anticipated Federal Funding for FY 2006 is \$8M in first year funding for 40 - 60 number of awards. Federal Funding for FY 2007 may be used in part to fund some awards submitted under this competition. Current plans assume that 100% of the total resources provided through this announcement will support extramural efforts, particularly those involving the broad academic community. Past or current grantees funded under this announcement are eligible to apply for a new award which builds on previous activities or areas of research not covered in the previous award. Current grantees should not request supplementary funding for ongoing research through this announcement. We anticipate that the annual cost of most funded projects will fall between \$50,000 and \$200,000 per year. The exact amount of funds that may be awarded will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA representatives. Neither NOAA nor the Department of Commerce is responsible for proposal preparation costs if this program is not funded for whatever reason. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

B. Project/Award Period

This Program Announcement is for projects to be conducted by investigators outside the Federal Government, primarily over a 1, 2, or 3 year period; except for the RISA program element which are over a 3-5 year period.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

The funding instrument for awards will be a grant unless it is anticipated that NOAA will be substantially involved in the implementation of the project, in which case the funding instrument should be a cooperative agreement. Examples of substantial involvement may include, but are not limited to, proposals for collaboration between NOAA or NOAA scientists and a recipient scientist or technician and/or contemplation by NOAA of detailing Federal personnel to work on proposed projects. NOAA will make decisions regarding the use of a cooperative agreement on a case-by-case basis. Funding for contractual arrangements for services and products for delivery to NOAA is not available under this announcement.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are institutions of higher education, other nonprofits, commercial organizations, international organizations, state, local and Indian tribal governments. Federal agencies or institutions are not eligible to receive Federal assistance under this notice.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

Cost Sharing is only required in one program element competition which is the NOAA Climate Transition Program (NCTP) where the Cost Share Percentage must be at least 5% of the total costs. The other seven Competitions have no cost sharing requirement.

IV. Application and Submission Information

All proposals must be submitted in accordance with the requirements listed below. Failure to heed the requirements will result in proposals being returned without review.

A. Letter of Intent (LOI)

The purpose of the LOI process is to provide information to potential applicants on the relevance of their proposed project to the C&GC program and the likelihood of it being funded in advance of preparing a full proposal. While it is in the best interest of the applicants and their institutions to submit an LOI, it is not a requirement; applicants who do not submit an LOI are allowed to submit a full proposal. Full proposals will be encouraged only for LOIs deemed relevant.

LOIs are encouraged to be submitted by facsimile or e-mail to the identified NOAA program element's program manager. LOI's can also be submitted electronically to ogpgrants@noaa.gov.

The LOI should provide a concise description of the proposed work and its relevance to the targeted program element. The LOI should be no more than two pages in length and should include the components listed below. If these components are not included, the LOI risks a delayed response and may not be considered by the program reviewers.

- (1) Identification of the program element that is being targeted in the LOI.
- (2) Specification of a tentative project title in the LOI.
- (3) Name(s) and institution(s) of all principal investigator(s), and specification of which individual is the Lead principal Investigator.
- (4) Statement of the problem.
- (5) Brief summary of work to be completed, methodology to be used, data sets needed or to be collected, and approximate cost of the project.

A panel of program managers will review each LOI to determine whether the LOI is responsive to the program goals as advertised in this notice. An LOI response (e-mail or letter) will be sent back to the investigator encouraging or discouraging a full proposal. The final decision to submit a full proposal will be made by the investigator.

B. Full Proposal Application

The following forms and elements are required in each application. Failure to comply with these provisions will result in proposals being returned without review.

Full Proposals shall be submitted in electronic form via Grants.gov APPLY. To apply for this NOAA federal funding opportunity, please go to www.grants.gov, and use the following funding opportunity # OAR-OGP-2006-2000116. If the applicant does not have access to electronic submission, please contact the OGP Grants Manager for instructions on a paper format submission; in such case, it must be mailed to the Office of Global Programs and received by the deadline. Facsimile transmissions of full proposals will not be accepted.

Proposals must be limited to 30 pages (numbered), including budget, investigators vitae, and all appendices, and should be limited to funding requests for 1 to 3 year duration; except for the RISA program element which must be a 3-5 year duration. Cooperative agreement proposals may submit a funding request for a 5 year duration. Appended information may not be used to circumvent the page length limit. Federally-mandated forms and the NEPA Statement are not included within the page count.

Required Elements (all full proposals must include the following):

(1) Title page: The title page shall identify the Principal Investigator (PI) and the institutional representative and should clearly indicate which program element is being addressed. If more than one investigator is listed on the title page, please identify the lead investigator. The PI and institutional representative should be identified by full name, title, organization, telephone number and address. For paper submissions, the title page must be signed by the PI and the institutional representative. The total amount of Federal funds being requested should be listed for each budget period.

(2) Abstract: An abstract must be included and should contain an introduction of the problem, rationale and a brief summary of work to be completed. The abstract should appear on a separate page, headed with the proposal title, institution(s), investigator(s), total proposed cost and budget period.

(3) Results from prior research: The results of each prior research project (during the last 3 years) relevant to the proposed effort should be summarized in brief paragraphs. This section should not exceed two pages.

(4) Statement of work: The proposed project must be completely described, including identification of the problem, scientific objectives, proposed methodology, relevance to the goal of the C&GC program, and the program priorities listed above. Benefits of the proposed project to the general public and the scientific community should be discussed. The statement of work, including references but excluding figures and other visual materials, must not exceed 15 pages of text. Proposals from 3 or more investigators may include a statement of work containing up to 15 pages of overall project description plus up to 5 additional pages for individual project descriptions.

(5) Budget Justification: A brief description of the expenses listed on the budget and how they address the proposed work. Item justifications must include salaries, equipment, publications, supplies, tuition, travel, etc.

(6) Budget: The proposal must include total and annual itemized budgets corresponding with the descriptions provided in the statement of work. Non-Federal Applicants must submit a Standard Form 424 (9-2003) "Application for Federal Assistance," including a detailed budget using the Standard Form 424a (7-97), "Budget Information -- Non-Construction Programs." Travel must be itemized to include destination, airfare, per diem, lodging and ground travel. The form is included in the standard NOAA application kit.

(7) Vitae: Abbreviated curriculum vitae are sought with each proposal. Reference lists should be limited to all publications in the last three years with up to five other relevant papers.

(8) Current and pending support: For each investigator, submit a list that includes project title, supporting agency with grant number, investigator months per year, dollar value and duration. Requested values should be listed for pending support.

(9) DUNS Number: All applications must have a DUNS (Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System when applying for Federal grants on or

after October 1, 2003. No application is deemed complete without the DUNS number and only OMB may grant exceptions.

(10) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA): NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website:

<http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/>, including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216--6--TOC.pdf>, and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations,

http://ceq.eh.doe.gov/nepa/regs/ceq/toc_ceq.htm Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their program activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems). In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting of an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. The failure to do so shall be grounds for not selecting an application. In some cases if additional information is required after an application is selected, funds can be withheld by the Grants Officer under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to make an assessment on any impacts that a project may have on the environment.

c. Submission Dates and Time

Letters of Intent should be received at the Office of Global Programs no later than 5 p.m. Eastern Time, May 20, 2005. Applicants who have not received a response to their Letter of Intent within four weeks should contact the identified NOAA program element's program manager or ogpgrants@noaa.gov.

Full proposals must be received no later than 5 p.m. Eastern Time, July 15, 2005. Proposals received after that time will not be considered for funding. A date time receipt indication is included and will be the basis of determining timeliness for applications submitted through Grants.gov APPLY. Hard copy applications will be date and time stamped when they are received.

d. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under this program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of federal programs."

C. Other Submission Requirements

(1) Electronic Submission: LOIs are encouraged to be submitted by facsimile or e-mail to the identified NOAA program element's program manager or to ogpgrants@noaa.gov. If an applicant does not have Internet access, LOI hard copies should be sent to the Program Managers listed with each program in the Program Priorities section or to the OGP Grants Manager (see below). Full Proposals shall be submitted in electronic form via Grants.gov APPLY.

(2) Location for Application Submission: Applications should be submitted through Grants.gov APPLY (<http://www.grants.gov>). If an applicant does not have Internet access, please contact the OGP Grants Manager (see below) for hard copy instructions.

V. Evaluation Criteria & Selection Procedures

A. Review and Selection Process

Once a full application has been received by OGP, an initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application.

Full proposals will be evaluated in accordance with the evaluation criteria below by (A) independent peer mail reviewers, and/or (B) independent peer panel reviewers consisting of both Federal and non-Federal experts. Only mail reviewers may be used if only a few applications are received. If peer panel reviewers evaluate all proposals, only their ratings may be used to establish the rank order. No consensus advice will be given by the panel.

The peer mail reviewers and peer panel reviewers rate each proposal using the above two evaluation criteria. The proposals will be scored from 1, for poor, to 5, for excellent, on Scientific/Technical Merit and from 1, for low, to 5, for high, on Importance/Relevance. The scores from each reviewer for each proposal will be averaged to produce an average numerical score for the proposal. The average scores for all proposals result in a numerical rank order.

Occasionally a reviewer may, due to lack of familiarity in a particular area, choose not to score a particular proposal. The scores from each peer panel reviewer for each proposal will be averaged to produce a single numerical score for the proposal. The average scores for all proposals result in a numerical rank order within each program element.

If peer mail review and peer panel review are both conducted, the available peer mail reviews will be provided to the peer review panel for use in its deliberations prior to providing its ratings.

If only a mail peer review was conducted, the Program Manager will use the rank numerical order of the mail reviews to determine funding recommendations. If only a peer panel review or both a peer panel review and a peer mail review were conducted, the Program Manager will use the numerical rank order of the peer review panel to determine funding recommendations.

The Program Manager will recommend proposals to the Selecting Official in numerical rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon any of the factors listed in the following section. The Program Manager will review the amounts requested for each selected proposal (including costs for computing and networking services) and recommend the total duration and the amount of funding, which may be less than the proposal and budget requested. The Selecting Official will review the recommendations.

B. Evaluation Criteria

1. Importance/Relevance and Applicability of Proposal to the Program Goals (50%)

This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities. For the C&GC grant program competition, this includes importance and relevance to the goals of the selected Program Element(s) (see Program Element descriptions above).

2. Technical/Scientific Merit (50%)

This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives.

3. Overall Qualifications of Applicants (0%)

This criterion assesses whether the applicant, and team members, possess the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. For the C&GC grant program competition, this criteria is not scored.

4. Project Costs (0%)

This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame. For the C&GC grant program competition, this criteria is not scored.

5. Outreach and Education (0%)

This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources. For the C&GC grant program competition, this criteria is not scored.

C. Selection Factors

The Selecting Official shall award in rank order unless a proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon any of the following factors:

1. Availability of funding
2. Balance/distribution of funds
 - a. Geographically
 - b. By type of institutions
 - c. By type of partners
 - d. By research area
 - e. By project types
3. Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA/federal agencies
4. Program priorities and policy factors
5. Applicant's prior award performance
6. Partnerships with/Participation of targeted group
7. Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the Grants Officer.

The Selecting Official makes final recommendations for award to the Grants Officer who is authorized to obligate the funds.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, review of proposals will occur during the 5 months following the full proposals due date. We anticipate that funding decisions on proposals will be made by December 2005 subject to/contingent to the final FY 2006 appropriation for NOAA by Congress and final allocation of funds to OGP by NOAA, and that funding for successful applicants will begin during winter 2006 for most approved projects. Proposals should use February 1, 2006, as the Start Date unless otherwise directed by the Program Manager.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Successful applicants will receive notification that the application has been recommended for funding to the NOAA Grants Management Division. This notification is not an authorization to begin performance of the project. Official notification of funding, signed by a NOAA Grants Officer, is the authorizing

document that allows the project to begin. Notifications will be issued to the Authorizing Official and the Principle Investigator of the project. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their proposal was not selected for recommendation. Unsuccessful applications will be kept on file in the Program Office for a period of at least 12 months, then destroyed.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements

The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of December 30, 2004 (69 FR 78389) is applicable to this solicitation.

Limitation of Liability

In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs if these programs fail to receive funding or are cancelled because of other agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

The National Environmental Policy Act is applicable to the Notice. See Section IV above for the necessary information.

C. Reporting

Award recipients will be required to submit financial and performance (technical) reports. These reports are to be submitted electronically unless the recipient does not have Internet access, in which case hard copy submissions will be accepted. All financial reports shall be submitted in triplicate (one original and two copies) to the NOAA Grants Officer. Performance reports should be submitted to the appropriate NOAA/OGP Program Manager. All reports will be submitted on an annual schedule. The first technical progress report of a multi-year award is due 9 months after the start date of the award. The comprehensive final report is due 90 days after the award expiration.

VII. Agency Contacts

Please visit the OGP website for further information <http://www.ogp.noaa.gov> or contact the OGP Grants Manager, Diane Brown, NOAA/OGP, 1100 Wayne Avenue, Suite 1210, Silver Spring, MD 20910-5603
Phone: 301-427-2357
Fax: 301-427-2222

E-mail: ogpgrants@noaa.gov